

What is claimed is:

1. In a database for a transaction service, a data entity describing a
5 reservable service (reservable), comprising:
 - an indication of a service to be performed;
 - a time line for the service describing time intervals in which the
service may be performed over an extended time period; and
 - an indication of the time duration required for performing the service.
- 10 2. The reservable of claim 1 further comprising an indication of a supplier
offering to perform the service.
3. The reservable of claim 1 formed as an Extensible Markup Language
15 (XML) expression.
4. The reservable of claim 1 further comprising an indication of vertical
classification as a particular category or family of related services.
- 20 5. The reservable of claim 1 further comprising an indication of a
geographic region in which the service is constrained to be performed.
6. In a database for a transaction service, a data entity describing an
engaged reservable service (engagement), comprising:
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 - an indication of a service to be performed;
 - a date, a time and a site for the service to be performed;
 - an indication of a customer having engaged the reservable service

and

an indicator that the entity is an engagement to be consummated at a future time.

7. The engagement of claim 6 formed as an Extensible Markup Language (XML) expression.

8. A database comprising:

reservable services (reservables) stored as positive data entities, each reservable including an indication of a service to be performed, a time line for the service describing time intervals in which the service may be performed over an extended time period, and an indication of the time duration required for performing the service; and

a control system;

characterized in that the control system searches for and retrieves reservables matching service requests provided from a source or sources external to the database.

9. The database of claim 8 wherein reservables are organized hierarchically by vertical categories, and wherein the control system searches only in those portions of the database comprising reservables matching the category of the service requests.

10. The database of claim 8 also comprising engaged reservable services (engagements) stored as positive data entities, each engagement including an indication of a service to be performed, a date, a time and a site for the service to be performed, and an indicator that the entity is an engagement to be consummated at a future time, wherein the control system forms

engagements from reservables following matches found between the service requests and the reservables.

5 11. The database of claim 10 wherein the control system amends engaged reservables in the database following creation of an engagement, and adds engagements to the database.

10 12. The database of claim 10 wherein the reservables and the engagements are implemented as Extensible Markup Language (XML) expressions.

13. The database of claim 12 wherein the control system creates supplier-independent reservables from other XML entities in the database, including resource capabilities and availabilities.

15 14. The database of claim 13 wherein the control system creates supplier-specific reservables including supplier identification.

15. A method for forming a data entity in a database, the data entity for describing a reservable service (reservable), comprising the steps of:
20 (a) establishing an indication of a service to be performed;
(b) adding an indication of a time duration for the service;
(c) adding an indication of time intervals over an extended time line wherein the service may be performed; and
(d) adding an indicator that the service is not reserved (engaged).

25 16. The method of claim 15 further comprising a step (e) adding an indication of a supplier offering to perform the service.

17. The method of claim 15 wherein the data entity is formed as an Extensible Markup Language (XML) expression.

18. The method of claim 15 further comprising a step (e) for adding an indication of vertical classification as a particular category or family of related services.

19. A method for forming a data entity in a database, the data entity describing an engaged reservable service (engagement), comprising the steps of:

(a) accepting a request for a service to be performed from a customer external to the database;

(b) searching an inventory of reservable services (reservables), each reservable comprising an indication of a service to be performed, an indication of time intervals in an extended time line wherein the service may be, and an indicator that the service is not reserved (engaged);

(c) selecting a reservable capable of fulfilling the request for service;

(d) copying information from the reservable to create an engagement specifying a date, time and place for the service to be performed; and

(e) associating the engagement with the customer making the request.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein the reservable is an Extensible Markup Language (XML) expression and the engagement formed is an XML expression.

21. In a database comprising reservable services (reservables) stored as positive data entities, each reservable including an indication of a service to

be performed, a time line for the service describing time intervals in which the service may be performed over an extended time period, and an indication of the time duration required for performing the service, a method for matching reservables with customers, comprising the steps of:

- 5 (a) receiving a customer request including details of a desired service;
- (b) searching the database for reservables matching the details of the customer request; and
- (c) retrieving matching reservables.

10 22. The method of claim 21 wherein reservables are organized hierarchically by vertical categories, and wherein, in step (b) the database is searched only in those portions comprising reservables matching the category of the service requests.

15 23. The method of claim 21 further comprising a step (d) for forming engagements from reservables following matches found between the service requests and the reservables,
each engagement including an indication of a service to be performed, a date, a time and a site for the service to be performed, and an indicator that
20 the entity is an engagement to be consummated at a future time.

24. The method of claim 23 further comprising a step (e) for deleting engaged reservables from the database, and adding engagements to the database.

25 25. The method of claim 23 wherein the reservables and the engagements are implemented as Extensible Markup Language (XML) expressions.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein supplier-independent reservables are created from other XML entities in the database, including resource capabilities and availabilities.
- 5 27. The method of claim 26 wherein supplier-specific reservables are created including supplier identification.

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